Assam as on 31.3.2001. The Telecom District-wise details of pending applications are given below:—

Name of the Telecom Distt.	Application pending for allotment of public telephone booths
Kamrup	310
Dibrugarh	8
Silchar	0
Jorhat	47
Bongaigaon	328
Tezpur	5 0
Nagaon	
TOTAL	698

(b) The pending applications are to be cleared progressively by August, 2001.

TRAI out of scrutiny of CAG

4168. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Telecome Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has been taken out of scrutiny of the CAG; and

(b) if so, the reasons for such a decision by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No, Sir Under Section 23(2) of the TRAI Act, the accounts of TRAI shall be audited by the CAG at such intervals as may be specified by him. This provision empowering the CAG to audit the accounts of TRAI has not been affected by the amendment to Section 23(2) of the Act, which has only inserted an explanation for the removal of doubts, stipulating that decisions of the authority taken in discharge of its functions under clause (b)

of sub-section (1) and sub-section (2) of section 11 and section 13, being matters appealable to the Appellate Tribunal, shall not be subject to audit under this section.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Corporadsation of Stock Exchanges

4169. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO:
SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to corporatise all Stock Exchanges;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when it will be done; and

(c) the other steps proposed to be taken to maintain transparency in the market operations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) With a view to improving institutional mechanisms and trading practices in the stock markets, Government proposes to demutuatise all stock exchanges, by which ownership, management and trading membership would be segregated from each other. This would help towards:

- further professionalisation of the management of the exchanges and elimination of conflict of interests;
- improving adherence to the best practices of Corporate Governance;
- enhancing the ability of stock exchanges to raise funds from the market to modernise the exchanges and provide better investor service.

Government and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) have initiated action in this regard.

(c) The other steps proposed include, *inter-alia,* appropriate strengthening of SEBI.